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“Do you mean besides researching and studying?”

Finnish teacher educators’ views on their professional development

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Introduction

Finnish teacher education has undergone a huge change from a modest academic status in the 1970s to the highly appreciated research-based model of today (e.g. Toom, Kynäslahti, Krokfors, Jyrhämä, Byman, Stenberg, Maaranen & Kansanen, 2010). The shift in the academic status of teacher educators in elementary teacher education programmes took place gradually. In the early stages there were only a few people in the faculty who had completed a doctoral degree, but nowadays basically the entire faculty consists of PhDs. This enhanced academic status has increased research as part of the teacher educators' work. One of the tasks of Finnish teacher educators is to conduct research, and most professors who have education as their primary discipline publish their research in leading international educational journals and monograph series. Most of the lecturers in teacher education are senior lecturers, who have PhD degrees and have the title of associate professor or docent. The faculty staff should also have pedagogical qualifications in order to qualify for a position in teacher education (Tirri, 2014).

Dengerink, Luneberg & Kools (2015, 79) define teacher educator as "Higher education academic staff with a responsibility for teacher education, research or subject studies and didactics, as well as teaching practice supervisors, school mentors, induction tutors and supporters of induction networks, and also those in charge of teachers' continuous professional development." In the Finnish system, we regard teacher educators as firstly those professionals who work in the Faculties of Education of research-intensive universities and have the task of educating future teachers. They are mostly university (=senior) lecturers and professors, who hold doctoral degrees, most often in the field of

education. Secondly, we regard teacher educators as those professionals who work in Finnish university teacher training schools. The main task of these professionals' is to teach school pupils and older students, but their secondary task includes supervising teaching practice. Many of the teachers at teacher training schools also hold doctoral degrees. In the universities, there are also postdoctoral researchers and doctoral students who participate in teacher education with a small number of teaching hours. In the Finnish teacher education system we also have supervisors in field schools, but they are not included in this article. That is because their main task is to teach school pupils and older students and their employer is the school's municipality. Their voluntary task is to supervise teacher students infrequently, but not necessarily even once a year. The practicums last for approximately 5-7 weeks, and the supervisors, who have received a professional development course in supervising at the university, receive a small payment for their services. This differs from many other countries, where teacher students often have field practice that lasts a long time, and the responsibility for educating a new teacher relies heavily on the school teacher that supervises the practicum.

There seems to be rather little research on Finnish teacher educators, both in general, as well as regarding their professional development. Hökkä, Eteläpelto & Rasku-Puttonen (2012) and Hökkä, Vähäsantanen & Mahlakaarto (2017) have studied the collective identity formation of Finnish teacher educators. Krokfors et al. (2011) have studied the conceptions of research-based education among Finnish teacher educators, and Tryggvason (2009) has studied teacher educators' goals for teaching and Finnish subject teacher educators' perceptions of identity (2012). Hökkä, Rasku-Puttonen & Eteläpelto (2008) have studied the workplace learning of teacher educators. Except for the last mentioned, none of these studies focus solely on the theme of teacher educators' professional development. Moreover, there are no official initiatives for teacher educators' professional development in Finland, as is the case in some other countries, such as the S-STEP community in the United States (Loughran et al. 2004), the MOFET institute in Israel (Golan and Reichenberg 2015), and the Norwegian NAFOL research school (Tack, Valcke, Rots, Struyven & Vanderlinde, 2018, 87.

The study presented in this paper was inspired by a study by Kools, Avissar, White, & Sakata (2017), in which they researched the professional development of teacher educators in ten different countries. The present qualitative case study is particularly interested in finding out what Finnish teacher educators think about their professional development. Fifteen teacher educators were interviewed for this research, in which the main research question was: *What elements are involved in a teacher educator's professional development in Finland?*

Theoretical Background

The professional development of teacher educators

According to Van der Klink, Kools, Avissar, White & Sakata (2017, 163) "[t]here is a growing recognition that teacher educators can only continue to act as professionals if they are engaged in further professional development throughout their entire career." Smith (2003) has conceptualized professional development as development that takes place after a person has started working as a teacher educator, and according to her, there is no fixed route or end to the development, as long as they work in the profession (p. 203). According to McGee and Lawrence (2009, 140), teacher educators' own professional learning is particularly important, because they support teachers' professional learning, and because of that it is surprising that it is often neglected. Van der Klink et al. (2017, 164) and Swennen & Van der Klink (2009) also emphasize the importance of development of competences and lifelong learning. Gallagher, Griffin, Parker, Kitchen, & Figg (2011) claim that teacher education is complex work involving the curriculum, pedagogy and research. According to them, even if this is acknowledged, most teacher educators are provided with little professional development support or mentoring in most teacher education programmes (880).

Based on a study by Van Velzen, Van der Klink, Swennen & Yaffe (2010), novice teacher educators indicated that during their first years they are faced with immense pressures, not only because of the

work duties, but also because they feel insecure about what is expected of them. Snoek, Swennen & Van der Klink (2011) have reported on policy measures aimed at enhancing the professionalism of teacher educators in 16 European countries. According to them, careful and thoughtful consideration of the advancement of lifelong professional development had not yet taken place in any of the countries (Snoek et al, 2011). There is still very little research done on teacher educators' professional development and much more is needed, especially large-scale, international comparative studies:

> Studies on professional development have focused on the significance of concerns, activities and context. Drawing on the work of Conway & Clark (2003), Dengerink et al. (2015) reported a pattern in their study on the professional development of Dutch teacher educators. They observed a shift in teacher educators' personal focus from concerns about their personal classroom management capacities to concerns about the personal ability to grow as a teacher and person. (Van der Klink et al 2017, 165)

In addition, many studies about teacher educators' induction phase have shown that the main concern in the beginning is 'to survive' and to find out what it means to be a teacher educator and to become engaged in the shift from teacher to second-order teacher (Murray & Harrison, 2008; Swennen & Van der Klink, 2009; Van Velzen et al, 2010; White, 2013; Murray & Male, 2005):

> This shift in concerns is partly explained as soon as we take into account the tasks teacher educators perform. Duties in the further course of their career differ from those in the early years. Whereas in their induction phase most teacher educators are involved primarily in student-related work duties, later in their career their involvement in coordinating and managerial duties, research and mentoring increases (Ben-Perez, 2001). As teacher educators become more experienced, they need to be able to cope with the institutional pressure to maintain high standards, to deliver sufficient research outputs and to succeed in winning competitive grants and tenders. The latter is especially important when it comes to advanced academic promotion since the number

> of publications in refereed journals serves as the main criterion (Smith, 2005). (Van der Klink et al. 2017, 165-166)

Smith (2003) suggests encouraging teacher educators' professional development, such as attending academic studies, participation in seminars and workshops, staff development and feedback on one's own teaching. She also suggests measures that are reasonably easy to implement, such as the organization of regular staff meetings, the use of action learning within teams, arranging feedback from supervisors, colleagues and students, and the observation of experienced colleagues (Smith, 2003). According to Van der Klink et al (2017, 166), there is growing support for the belief that the most powerful learning experiences take place as a result of being part of a community, network or team, and that learning between members is perhaps even more meaningful than individual learning. Further on, referring to Barak et al (2010), they state, that organizing team-related ways of working could have a significant impact on teacher educators' professional development (Van der Klink et al., 2017, 166).

In Van der Klink et al.'s (2017) study all their participants had taken part in learning activities. These included training courses, seminars, workshops, conferences and courses about a wide range of subjects, varying from teaching specific subjects, ICT, as well as pedagogical and general teaching skills. They also mentioned learning activities connected to their daily work, such as attending meetings, discussions and consulting colleagues (Van der Klink et al, 2017, 171). In Van der Klink et al.'s (2017) study, only a few participants referred to encouraging conditions within their own institute. The barriers that hindered these participants' professional development included lack of time (too many competing work tasks or difficulties related to balancing between work and other responsibilities). In summary, participants mentioned that their professional development was strongly related to their own intrinsic motivation. According to studies by Van Velzen et al. (2010) and Snoek et al (2011), inhibitors include lack of time, a considerable workload, lack of resources,

absence of managerial attention for, and reinforcement of, professional development, and an unproductive working climate.

The role of research in teacher education

Research and especially self-studies that focus on one's own practices seem to foster the professional development of teacher educators. Recently, Van der Klink, et al. (2017) have argued that all kinds of "research-activity" are beneficial for the professional development of teacher educators. It seems that writing research articles contribute positively to the learning process of teacher educators. Research methodological help of experienced researchers is also very important for one's professional development. However, not all teacher educators are interested in research and the theoretical argumentation of their work (see e.g., Meeus, Cools & Placklé, 2018; Griffiths, Thompson, and Hryniewicz 2010, Dengerink, Lunenberg and Kools, 2015). In the study of Meeus et al. (2018), the Flemish teacher educators reflected on their professional roles over the past 2 years. The most popular role was "teacher of teachers". This might depend on what is the background of the teacher education institution, whether it is a research-intensive, or a more practically oriented institution, which can be the case for example in the Netherlands, whereas in the Finnish context, all teacher education programmes are located in research-intensive universities.

Loughran (2014, 277) argues, "that to be a 'smart consumer' of research, a teacher educator needs to be, or at least seek to be, well informed". According to him, it is not sufficient to pass on the accumulated tips and tricks of classroom teaching but, "the multiple issues, concerns, contradictory findings, and diverse array of approaches to understanding the complexity of classroom practice need to be based on more than one's own experience" (Loughran, 2014, 277). Self-study has become a very popular way of conducting teacher education research in many countries all over the world:

> Self-study of teacher education practices (S-STEP) has proved attractive to many teacher educators because it places teaching and learning about teaching at the center of the research endeavor. The range of research reports and opportunities to make the outcomes of self-study public and available for critique are numerous, beyond books … there is a biennial conference in the United Kingdom and S-STEP is one of the largest Special Interest Groups (SIG) in the American Education Research Association (AERA) and sponsors the journal Studying Teacher Education. (Loughran, 2014, 278)

Loughran (2014) emphasizes that self-study research as part of other types of educational research "should be appropriately considered, interpreted, critiqued, and applied in relation to its place in, and value to, teacher education" (279). Loughran (2014) considers this to be one of those elements that can lift teacher educators' professional development. Also in Van der Klink et al.'s (2017) study, research (albeit not specified as self-study, or anything else for that matter) appeared to contribute significantly to their participants' professional development. In their study over one-half of the participants were 'research-active', and this was often perceived by them as a way to keep in touch with the latest developments and to contribute actively to enlarging the body of knowledge, and writing research articles was seen to be an activity with a high learning value (174-175).

Finnish research-based teacher education has four main characteristics: the study programme is structured according to a systematic analysis of education; all teaching is based on research; activities are organized in such a way that students can practise argumentation, decision-making and justification when inquiring about and solving pedagogical problems; and students learn formal research skills during their studies. In Finnish teacher education programmes teacher educators teach what they research, or their teaching is based on high-quality research produced by other researchers in the field (Krokfors et al., 2011; Kansanen, 2007; Toom et al., 2010; Westbury et al., 2005).

In our previous study (Krokfors et al., 2011), teacher educators mentioned the status of teacher education as an academic subject as one of the main elements of research-based teacher education:

> A university teacher is both a researcher and a teacher – this applies not only to teacher education but also to university teaching in general: inquiry into one's own discipline is expected. However, teacher educators are among the few groups of teachers for whom inquiring into one's own work as a university teacher is a reality: the target of the research is teaching and learning, and that is what the educator is doing. In our view, the research-based teacher education paradigm incorporates activities of academic research, while at the same time the pedagogical goal is to educate practitioner researchers, teachers who develop their work through practical inquiry (see also Richardson, 1994; Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). (Krokfors et al., 2011, 11)

According to the results of this study, the teacher educators appreciate the research-based approach to which the university is committed, although they were sceptical about how well this vision transfers to students (Krokfors et al., 2011). A study by Koster, Brekelmans, Korthagen & Wubbels (2005) investigated the quality requirements and competences of teacher educators. Based on their study, the most important competences were content competence and communicative and reflective competencies. Less important were organizational and pedagogical competencies. The researchers added a fifth competence to this profile, research competence, which was considered more relevant to teacher educators at research intensive universities. However, the combination of researching and teaching can also cause controversies, as the following example shows:

> Most teacher educators also function in the political and economic contexts of universities. While their students are especially interested in their expertise as teacher educators, criteria for promotion mainly focus on the quality of their research and on the amount of publications teacher educators produce. This clearly creates problems for those teacher educators who are becoming increasingly aware of the discrepancies between new insights about teaching, learning and the role of research on the one hand and the traditional academic context in which they work on the other. (Korthagen, Loughran & Luneberg, 2005, 109)

Context of the Study: Finnish teacher education and teacher educators

Finnish teacher education is research-based, which means that all studies are connected with research. Besides that, all teacher students also write a bachelor's and master's thesis as part of their degree. Pedagogical thinking, personal practical theory, reflection, and inquiry-orientation are emphasized, and they are also practised in many ways during the studies. This means that teachers in Finland are highly educated, and all elementary school teachers, as well as subject teachers in the comprehensive school or high school must hold a master's degree. The high level of education is a necessity, because teachers in Finland are highly autonomous (Jyrhämä & Maaranen, 2016). There are eight research-intensive universities in Finland that provide teacher education. The nation has a common basis for teacher's qualifications, although all universities have their own curriculum and emphases.

Within Finnish teacher education, there are typically four types of faculty positions: professors, assistant professors (tenure-track), university lecturers, and lecturers. There are also research directors, postdoctoral researchers, researchers, doctoral students, research coordinators, etc. Only the lecturer's position does not require a doctoral degree, whereas doctoral students are, of course, in the process of acquiring the degree. The teaching and research faculty have a contract for 1,624 working hours per annum. Teaching takes place during four periods, between the beginning of September and early May. The annual number of working hours (1,624 hrs) is divided between teaching, research, administrative tasks and societal impact. Depending on the individual's job description, the emphasis is either on research or on teaching.

In Finnish universities the practices are mainly similar, but the following examples are from the University of Helsinki. Professors are expected to teach between 80-142 hours per academic year, whereas university lecturers are expected to teach 150-330 hours per academic year, if their position

has an emphasis on research. If the university lecturers' position has instead a teaching emphasis, then their teaching load is 350-396 hours, which is the same for lecturers with MA degrees. Post doc researchers and doctoral students are expected to teach a maximum of 49 hours per academic year. If the faculty member has significant administrative tasks (such as being a dean or vice-dean, the director of the department, programme director, or other leadership positions) then the teaching hours can be reduced somewhat. All the teaching hours in the previous examples are only contact hours, thus excluding planning and assessment.

Each faculty member constructs a work plan in which they allocate the 1,624 hours of resource to different tasks (teaching, research, administration). Professors and assistant professors are expected to produce research and apply and receive external funding. University lecturers are also expected to seek funding and produce research. The results of the faculty members are measured by publications, which are categorized based on the Finnish Publication Forum. The Forum categorizes national and international journals into three categories, of which level 1 is basic, level 2 is leading, and level 3 is top. Based on the university's funding model, the faculty is encouraged to publish especially in refereed journals and books, the higher the forum categorization level, the better. The results of the Faculty are also measured based on the number of degrees produced and on feedback from students. How faculty members are succeeding in their position is evaluated in a yearly discussion with their superior.

Finnish teacher educators possess almost without exception doctoral degrees, and nearly everyone has teaching qualifications, along with some experience from teaching at schools (see also, e.g., Kansanen, 2006; Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2006; (Jyrhämä & Maaranen, 2016).

Research Methods, Data, and Analysis

This is a qualitative case study of a Faculty of Education in a Finnish research-intensive university. The participants in this study were 15 teacher educators who volunteered to be interviewed about their professional development. The average age of the interviewees was 46 years, and their average experience as a teacher educator was 11 years. Ten worked as university lecturers, two as postdoctoral researchers, two as professors, and one as a doctoral researcher. These teacher educators had approximately 60 publications per person based on the University's open database. The numbers varied from a little under ten to almost 200 publications per teacher educator, depending on their position and the amount of experience in academia.

The data comprise 15 semi-structured interviews, which were digitally recorded and transcribed. The interviews lasted approximately 56 minutes, varying between 34 minutes to 1 hour and 28 minutes.

For this article we analysed questions related to the participants' professional development activities, five questions in all. The data was analysed using data-driven content analysis with the aid of the Atlas.ti 7 software program. An open coding scheme was used based on an inductive approach without specifying a theoretical framework. All the interview material was combined, being analysed as a combined matrix of interviews rather than from an individual's point of view. The interviews were read through several times, and each meaningful unit of thought, be it short or long, was coded. After that, categories were formed and based on them we created generic and main categories (Elo & Kyngäs 2008, 111; also Dey 1993). The results are then presented according to two main categories formed from the data: *Research activity* and *Development as a teacher educator*. The extracts from the interviews are coded as TE (teacher educator) and the number of the interviewee. To protect the anonymity of the participants, their position or field of expertise is not revealed.

The results

Research activity

In the main category research activity, we were able to distinguish two generic categories, the professional aspect to research activity and the personal aspect to research activity. The professional aspect to research activity consists of categories that describe the producing and consuming of research, whereas the personal aspect to research activity consists of categories which express a more individual perspective on research, for instance suffering from pressure, not having enough time, and choosing to collaborate in projects.

Professional research aspect

In the professional aspect, the most frequently mentioned way to be research active was project work, which includes being a part of a research project that is either externally funded or another type of larger research project in which the teacher educator participates:

> And I have one, I mean we have a project, which I am one of the applicants, we have Academy funding for a four-year project. … Its context is multicultural, and there are four countries involved in it. TE3
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> ***
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> I am currently working on research among children and early childhood education … I am involved in many projects and in these multidisciplinary projects where we study the wellbeing of children from multiple aspects. … I am currently analysing the data …
>
> TE12

Writing journal articles is a major part of Finnish teacher educators' work, and it was also one of the most frequently mentioned activities:

> … I have been doing research, for example this past fall we wrote articles and submitted them and now a couple of them came back with reviews, and two have now been resubmitted. TE13
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> My research activity is exactly according to the employer's strategy, although it does not always depend on yourself, but so far I have produced 1-3 articles a year. TE15

Consuming research meant that the teacher educators read journal articles as part of their work, and they also followed what their colleagues did regarding research. Some also mentioned following different media to keep up to date with recent advances in the sector, as well as participating in research conferences:

> … and when you write, you of course do some of these basic [database] searches, and try to go through what some people have published or what kind of stuff there is. TE5
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> ***
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> … and yes, I follow the work of many other researchers in this field. TE6
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> ***
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> … well, I quite closely follow this research, because there is so much of it, so in my two research lines I read some of the most important journals in this particular field. TE1

Personal research aspect

In the personal research aspect the teacher educators most often mentioned working collaboratively with international colleagues or being a part of a collaborative research group:

> … And now, maybe also this international comparative study, because I have some of these older, unfinished articles with a couple of colleagues from abroad. So the aim is that we would compare teachers, how for example they assess, and what kind of modules they have for assessment in their teacher education programmes, and what the teachers really do in their classrooms. TE5
>
> ***
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> … I have a colleague from that department with whom we are going to begin a study. And then I have an international project which we are currently writing the application for … I think it's very good to have a colleague to do research with; it's okay to do it alone too, but I have, for example, been working with X and our collaboration has worked very well, and it has been very meaningful to me. Then you sort of have deadlines, and kind in which you decide in what order you'll advance the study, who is going to do what, and then send it to the other to continue, and we have been able to keep the schedules and proceed with the research. TE13

Dissertations were mentioned both as continuing to do research with the same theme as in the dissertation work, as well as doing PhD at that moment as the main full-time task. A few participants mentioned a lack of time for research as well as not having enough time to read research literature broadly enough, though one teacher educator did mention that here was enough time to do research:

> And I still feel that I don't know enough and I have too little time to read. And it has an effect on, for example supervising theses, because in the supervision of theses, you should have an extremely broad knowledge of what others are researching. Because the student does not have time do wide searches in the BA phase, it would be really good

> if the supervisor could say: “use these and these search words, and you’ll be able to get on with your work. TE11
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> ***
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> … and that is one of my concerns, which relates to being a researcher in general. The number of published articles has exploded, and the variety regarding the quality is enormous. So you should practically have like 30 minutes every day to search, think, read, and so on. Then maybe you’d be able to follow the field enough. But at the moment it is really purposeful what I search. I put the exact search words that are relevant to me, and if the results don’t hit my mission or what I want to say with my own study, then I skip those articles. I don’t think anyone has a clear view of the entirety [of publications]. TE3

A few interviewees experienced pressure regarding either applying for external funding, starting a new research project, or applying to become an associate professor:

> Of course there is pressure, because I should be applying for external funding, and I have applied, but I haven’t received it. So it is something that is nagging in the background all the time: besides doing the university lecturer’s work, you should have an application in all the time somewhere, and it’s a lot of work. So I guess applying for external funding is the biggest pressure for me, and it sort of bothers me, because I can’t just focus on throwing myself into research completely It’s a really big deal. TE6

Only five teacher educators mentioned having conducted some sort of self-study research. Ten had not done self-study research, but two had plans to do it. Besides that, it seemed that the concept and definition of self-study research was unclear to many:

> Interviewer: Have you researched your own work, done this self-study type of research?

TE: No

Interviewer: …at all? Have you ever thought…

TE: No, no

Interviewer: …. of doing it?

TE: I've never even thought about it. TE12

***

Interviewer: Have you researched your own work, done this self-study type of research?

TE: Sort of yes, one. We wrote this paper in this international group, in which everyone talked about their own praxis, and their ways of working, and we all wrote a small piece about it. So there will be views from many different teacher educators, from different countries, so yes, I have done that kind of article. But other ways, no I haven't done anything about my own work. TE14

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Interviewer: Have you researched your own work, done this self-study type of research?

TE: No I haven't.

Interviewer: Have you ever thought about doing it?

TE: If it means that you collect data from the students, like in the beginning of the course and then after the course and there are different questions about whether their conceptions have changed during the course, and how the course was realized, and so on, then yes, I have thought about it, but so far it has just been a thought. And I'd like to do that with a colleague, not alone. TE15

Development as a teacher educator

The three generic categories that were formed for development as teacher educator are: formal professional development, informal professional development, and plans for professional development.

Formal professional development

Formal professional development consists of research as professional development, which many teacher educators mentioned. Mostly the teacher educators mentioned conducting research, but also reading research literature, as well as participating in conferences, and supervising theses:

> Interviewer: In what other ways have you developed your work professionally as a teacher educator?
>
> TE: Do you mean besides researching and studying? TE5
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> ***
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> In my opinion, in teacher education regarding the professional development aspect, you always approach it from the research perspective, so that [research] is in my opinion the main form of professional development. TE2
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> ***
>
> When this interview invitation came [by email] I thought: "How can you develop? How can you develop? You can't, like on Friday from 10-12." So it is a bit difficult to me to verbalize it, because in my opinion, doing research is such an integral part of your [work], you keep up to date. And it does also develop the teacher's work continuously and me as a teacher, as sharer of knowledge. TE12

Formal professional development included professional development courses, which about half had participated in and half had not, at least in recent years. One teacher educator had organized a staff development course for the faculty, where an outside expert came to teach the course, and the teacher educator was also able to learn from the course himself. However, most of the professional development courses mentioned were technically oriented, such as learning new ICT tools.

The teacher educators also mentioned that they develop their teaching, by, for example, systematically collecting feedback from students and reflecting on that. Various other ways of developing teaching were also mentioned, for instance, listening to international web lectures, borrowing ideas from other courses, and developing an experimental practicum:

> … I listen to, partially just for fun, but semi-seriously as well, quite a lot of these web lectures from other countries. And from them you learn these practices from different countries, well mainly the US higher education practices. For example, they use a lot of these TAs, teaching assistants, who are doctoral students and who help and guide the discussions. And often the pods I listen to are more theoretical or philosophical, and from them I have got ideas like: "Hey, why couldn't I do like this, too?" So, for instance, instead of reading several empirical papers during a course, you would only choose one, and the students would read it really thoroughly. And that is what we've done in this one course, we've moved on to one main source reading which we have supported with some additional stuff, and then we discuss things. So, these kind of ways…. TE7
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> And when you've written and taught, only then do you understand it yourself [laughter]. So I think it's a continuous interactive discussion between research, and also your personal history, so it's always there along with you. And you have to think about

> yourself as a teacher, and you go even as far back as to your childhood. In my opinion, who I am as a teacher, is how I develop myself, where I come from, and where I'm going to go, I think it's continuous… it's reading, but it's also reflecting. And when you start building courses, if you've a new one, you have to go through all the time, what is this [content] related to. … This is the way I think, so it's that you know how to use history and that new knowledge and you're able to interweave them together. TE12

Informal professional development

Informal professional development included a theme such as personal learning. Many teacher educators had participated in some kind of voluntary, free-time education. For instance, they mentioned taking drama education courses, and arts, theatre, interaction courses, as well as studying some ICT programs in their own time and on their own:

> --- for example these research or analysis programs, this year I've learnt to use two new programs, but I haven't needed any course for that, I just watch some video on the internet, then I ask a friend and then I try it out. It's like, you just adopt it into your work, and then you update it when you need to. TE3
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> ***
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> … but a lot of it [professional development] is like, "Oh okay, now you have this Digi leap, you need to learn to use some new Digi tool, and oh, I guess I should take that into my course." So it is self-studying really. TE6
>
> ***
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> … I have this passion for art, music, and drama, and because of that, I've been to that kind of courses. TE10

Crossing borders means that these teacher educators considered their own personal professional development took place through, for example, working abroad, or outside of the university, as well as collaborating with people from other faculties:

> But it is also professional development, so that on purpose I applied and was elected to this X university to work as an assistant professor. And I got to see how others work and then I was also able to acquire that foreign language. So it's sort of professional development. TE3
>
> ***
>
> And then I try to cooperate quite a lot with people from X department, because that's the place where I can also supervise and evaluate MA theses. So that is also professional development. TE14

Plans for professional development

The teacher educators had professional development plans for the future. Most of the plans were teaching related, meaning that they aimed to continue developing their courses, and wanted to integrate ICT and blended learning, as well as renew the doctoral students' programme, and keep up to date with school-life as well as their own field of specialty:

> Well I guess you always try to do things a little bit differently, you develop your teaching, or try to change it at least in some ways. You try new ways to work… you exchange ideas with your colleagues … TE5

The professional development plans for the future also included further research. Some mentioned writing books, and some enhancing their own research methodology knowledge.

The plans also included more personal aspects to professional development. This means , for example, that the teacher educators mentioned wanting to engage more in internationalization in the future, as well as the intention of applying for an associate professorship in the near future. One teacher educator mentioned the need to learn Swedish better, another to grasp the social and political framework of teacher education better, and one mentioned the wish to have a mentor at work. One teacher educator also stated that she wished she just could cope under all the pressure and workload and thus not experience burnout in the near future.

Conclusions and Discussion

The results of this study show that the Finnish teacher educators studied identify very strongly with research. They were all active in producing research, publishing journal articles, book chapters or books. They had applied for external funding and belonged to research groups. They were all experts in a certain field, though that field was not necessarily what their teaching was mostly about. They aimed for high-quality publishing and had already proved to be highly qualified researchers. They considered research to be professional development. The Finnish teacher educators had hardly any experience of conducting self-study research, and many did not even have a clear idea what self-study is. In this way the Finnish teacher educators clearly differed from many colleagues abroad. Based on this study the focus of their research was on their own field specialization, not on their daily work as lecturers.

However, besides positive feelings, these teacher educators also expressed pressure about a lack of time to do research, about advancing in their career or being able to concentrate on applying for research funding. These pressures were created by the current financial model at the university, in

which rewards are based on publications, external funding, and speedy graduation of students, i.e. management by results.

Lunenberg, Dengerink, and Korthagen (2013) identify six professional roles of teacher educators: teacher or teachers, researcher, coach, curriculum developer, gatekeeper, and intermediary (Meeus, Cools & Placklé, 2018, 16-17). Loughran (2014) and Tack et al. (2018) claim that the role of the researcher is lacking from most teacher educators' practices, but this cannot be said to be the case in Finland, or with the participants in this study. Judging from the professional roles listed by Luneberg et al. (2013), our study showed that the role of researcher came up strongest. Research appears to be an integral and self-evident part of Finnish teacher educators' work and professionalism. In addition, when developing teaching is discussed, the idea of being "a teacher or teachers" is strongly present.

This study has shown similar findings to Dengerink et al.'s (2015) study with Dutch teacher educators. Their professional development or learning consisted mostly of consulting colleagues, reading scientific or professional literature and participating in seminars or conferences. However, unlike some other studies of teacher educators' professional learning or development (e.g. Tack et al., 2018; Czerniawaski, Guberman & MacPhail, 2017; Dengerink et al., 2015), the Finnish teacher educators in our study did not express a need for professional development, and instead it would seem that their needs were met by doing research. There were some individual comments about needing a mentor, but besides that, the teacher educators seemed to have either clear plans or no specific need for professional development. Because they related their own professional development very strongly to conducting research, it would seem that they considered their professional development to be in their own hands, and closely tied to current and future research projects, as well as to ideas about developing teaching.

As mentioned earlier, in Finnish teacher education teachers teach what they research, or they are otherwise experts in a certain field (though that field was not necessarily what their teaching was

mostly about). The Finnish teacher educators' research activities derive not only from the demands of the employers or the Ministry of Education, but also from the idea of being able to educate

future teachers in the best possible way. In Finland, education is strongly connected to the idea of the welfare state. The teaching profession is highly respected and education is still understood as a key to successful life. As Toom and Husu (2016, 48) put it, trust and hope are the two central interdependent facts of this Finnish educational mindset: teachers can work independently and locally in a collaborative way, enabling them to deliberate about and make decisions on issues that affect them and their students, as schools are given almost full autonomy in developing their daily delivery of education services. Also, the hope that education can promise brighter individual and societal futures and increase the level of social capital among citizens, is a remarkable value factor for Finnish teacher educators, motivating them to act as active research agents in the global field. However, the internationalization processes have their side effects too; although Finnish teacher educators research and publish actively (also in English), the question for future research is do teacher educators in schools and teachers in the field read these publications, and to what extent do they have an effect on the current development work in schools.

This study is a small qualitative case study of 15 teacher educators at one university. The results show interesting similarities but also some differences when compared with international findings. Finnish research-intensiveness can be understood within the context of the country's strong academic status of teacher education as well as its research-oriented faculties. According to Tirri (2014, 601), "[s]everal Finnish researchers have concluded that a combination of historical, cultural and sociological characteristics explain Finland's good living conditions, excellent education and high-quality teacher education (Simola 2005; Niemi 2012; Reinikainen 2012)". However, it would be important to investigate the professional development of Finnish teacher educators in a larger-scale research which covers other universities in the country. There is a clear need for more research concerning Finnish teacher education and teacher educators. As has been said many times by many

people, education can change the world. Teacher educators reach children through their students, future teachers, so it is extremely significant what teacher educators do, how they develop, and how the entire education of teachers is realized.

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